

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As part of the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) funded by the New York State Department of State (DOS), the Village of Schoharie's Local Planning Committee (LPC) developed a Downtown Schoharie Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) to advance shared community aspirations and priorities. The SIP aims to strengthen Schoharie's historic village center by enhancing the built environment, advancing placemaking and resilience practices, and supporting both new and longstanding local businesses. The plan celebrates "Fountaintown's" rural charm, rich American history, and vibrant small-town character while leveraging unique local attractions and community assets to foster economic growth and improve quality of life.

The SIP was developed by the LPC through a collaborative process with input from the public. The process was supported by a consultant team and state partners from DOS, Empire State Development (ESD), New York State Homes and Community Renewal (HCR), New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), and New York State Department of Transportation (NYS DOT).

The Schoharie community began by developing a Vision and Goals for downtown Schoharie and establishing Strategies needed to achieve those goals. Potential DRI projects were solicited through an Open Call for Projects early on in the DRI planning process. The LPC was tasked with evaluating the proposed projects using selection criteria that considered (1) project readiness, (2) catalytic effect, (3) co-benefits, (4) cost effectiveness, (5) public support, (6) alignment with Schoharie DRI goals, and (7) alignment with NYS DRI goals. Following an extensive evaluation process, the LPC recommended 10 transformative projects to the state for funding.

The 10 recommended DRI projects, totaling \$40.2 million, will revitalize downtown Schoharie by establishing a vibrant, mixed-use village center that celebrates Schoharie's heritage, attracts new residents and job opportunities, increases foot traffic, and strengthens the local economy.



SCHOHARIE WAS HISTORICALLY KNOWN AS "FOUNTAIN TOWN" IN THE ORIGINAL GERMAN, IN HOMAGE TO THE MANY LOCAL SPRINGS AND WATERWAYS



The projects will be catalysts for growth in addition to enhancing accessibility for all users. A **downtown branding and marketing campaign** together with improvements to **pedestrian access and connectivity** and **small projects to improve facades, local businesses, and public art** will create a welcoming, walkable environment that strengthens connections among Schoharie's cultural, recreational, and commercial assets. Upgrades to key community assets including the **Community Pool, Borden's Creamery Building, Farmer's Beef and Brew farm-to-table restaurant**, and **Schoharie Free Library** will upgrade existing downtown amenities into modern, accessible venues for community events, programming, and family activities. The addition of **Fire House Park** will provide a walkable public park for existing and new residents with active and passive recreational amenities for all ages. The expansion of the Farmer's Beef and Brew at 445 Main Street and of anchor employer Schoharie Dental at a **new commercial development at 218 Main Street** will add jobs and commercial spaces downtown while a **new housing development at 218 Main Street** will attract new residents, creating a more vibrant village center. Sustainability features and green infrastructure incorporated throughout the projects will enhance environmental resilience and long-term community vitality.

THE SCHOHARIE DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INITIATIVE AREA

The Village of Schoharie LPC established a 201-acre DRI Area encompassing the civic, cultural, and institutional heart of the village. The area centers on the historic Central Business District (CBD), which hosts a mix of businesses, municipal and county government buildings, and community services. Beyond Main Street, the DRI Area includes signature local assets and historic sites including Lily Park, Fox Creek Park, Lasell Park, the Old Stone Fort, the Schoharie Valley Railroad Museum, the 1743 Palatine House Museum, the Schoharie Community Pool, and the Schoharie Free Library.

The downtown area is situated within the Schoharie Valley between Schoharie and Fox Creeks. Approximately 45% of the DRI Area is within the 100-year floodplain. The DRI Area includes two Historic Districts and a variety of commercial, residential, and community uses.



SOURCE: NYS ITS GEDSPATIAL SERVICES, WESTCHSTER COUNTY GIS/AERIAL IMAGERY 2020, COUNTY OF SCHOHARIE REAL PROPERTY SERVICES 3034, ORDNSTREETMAP 2025

KEY OBSERVATIONS

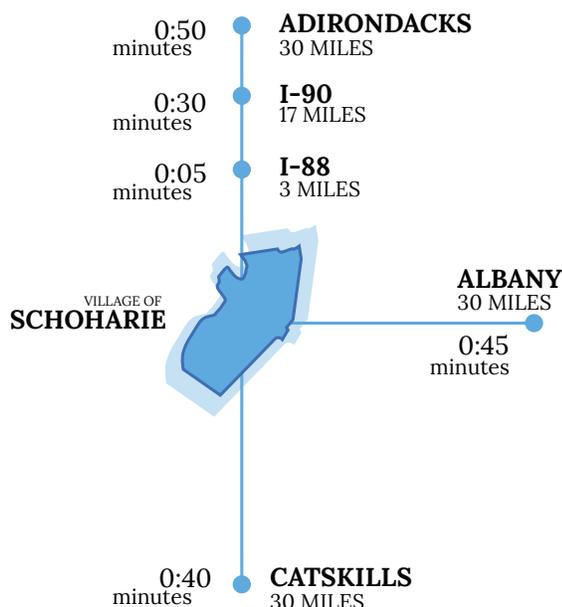
1 MARKETABLE LOCATION & ASSETS

The Village of Schoharie is situated in a picturesque valley near regional employment hubs with several tourist attractions and community and recreational resources.

Schoharie's proximity to I-88 and I-90 in the Mohawk Valley, with transit connections to Albany, position it as an accessible location for regional visitors and commuters. These include current and future employees working in Albany or along the New York Semiconductor Manufacturing and Research Technology Innovation (SMART I) Corridor.

Schoharie's many community, cultural, and recreational assets contribute to a high quality of life and a strong sense of community, reinforcing its marketability to potential residents.

The Schoharie Village Historic District provides an attractive setting and strong sense of place. Schoharie's historic attractions also bring thousands of visitors of all ages to the village each year. Tourism supports the local economy and could be expanded through the strategic use of downtown marketing, wayfinding, and visitor amenities.



2 DEMAND FOR DOWNTOWN HOUSING & AMENITIES

Recent studies and surveys indicate unmet demand for visitor and youth amenities, housing, gathering and event spaces, and food options in downtown Schoharie. Additional businesses and residents would increase vibrancy while supporting the village economy and local services.

By simultaneously improving public spaces, downtown amenities, and housing choices, Schoharie can attract more residents and visitors.

Initial investments could see returns from existing downtown visitors. These include students, families, and employees living throughout the county as well as tourists. As Schoharie expands amenities such as restaurants, venues, community spaces, lodging, and recreational resources, visitors will have the opportunity to spend more time and money downtown.

Increased amenities and activity will attract residents to new housing developments, and in particular families, working age residents, and higher-income households. A recent housing study estimates the village could support at least 95 additional housing units by 2040, showing a healthy demand for all housing types. Supply is particularly limited for working age populations, renters, and middle- and high-income households.

New residents and businesses will provide needed tax revenue to support village infrastructure, services, and amenities, including for vulnerable populations (e.g., seniors and very low-income households). More residents will also expand the customer and volunteer base for local businesses and long-standing community organizations.

3 DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

Revitalization in downtown Schoharie is constrained by flood hazard areas and rising costs.

Schoharie's historic buildings and older housing stock are relatively expensive to maintain and update to meet modern standards. The problem is compounded by rising construction costs and restricted financing nationwide. In addition, many existing buildings and available sites are within the flood hazard area. Flood risk mitigation can significantly increase costs and timelines for both new construction and adaptive reuse projects. High development costs have eroded housing affordability while discouraging new buildings and business expansion.

Leveraging public grants and incentive programs can help offset rising costs and fill funding gaps. These include grants offered by DOS and HCR as well as historic, decarbonization, and low-income housing tax credits. Providing local design standards and promoting modular/manufactured housing can also help reduce housing costs.

Attracting working age residents employed in a range of industries could reduce economic vulnerabilities in the longer term by increasing the local tax base and improving resilience to downturns in individual job sectors. Potential strategies include diversifying housing options, increasing local job opportunities, marketing the village to remote workers or commuters, and improving amenities for families.

Forward-looking planning that reduces flood risk and climate change impacts will help protect local investments. Development should continue to incorporate wetland and flood protection measures as well as green spaces and green infrastructure.

4 MOBILITY CONSTRAINTS

Insufficient pedestrian infrastructure limits walkability within the DRI Area

Speeding vehicles and truck traffic along Schoharie's Main Street create an uncomfortable environment for pedestrians. These conditions discourage foot traffic in the central business district and raise safety concerns along NYS Route 30.

The DRI Area is a walkable scale but lacks sidewalk and mobility device connections to local destinations. These include all three public parks - Lily Park, Fox Creek Park, and Lasell Park - and the village's three museums - Old Stone Fort, 1743 Palatine House, and the Schoharie Valley Railroad Museum. Pedestrian crossings to these and other destinations, including the library, village pool, and businesses, are also inadequate. In addition, there is a need to improve accessibility with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant connections to and within downtown buildings and amenities.

The village can reinforce walkability and economic growth by implementing traffic calming along NYS Route 30, improving connections to local parks and attractions, and encouraging infill development downtown.

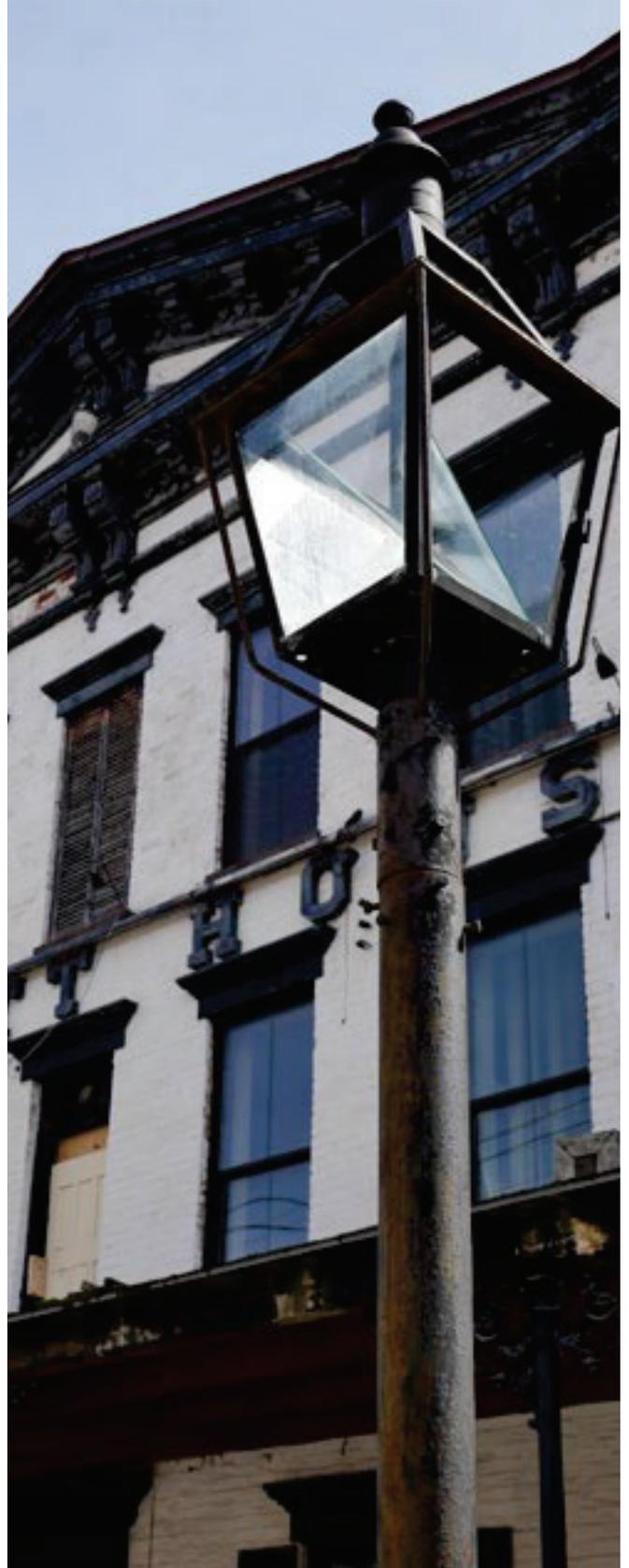
5 ROBUST PLANNING FRAMEWORK & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Schoharie Downtown Revitalization Initiative is a continuation of decades of community-based planning.

The Village of Schoharie has promoted downtown revitalization through a series of related plans and projects over the past 20 years. Community members have been highly engaged in these plans, repeatedly reaffirming their interest to:

- Implement complete streets that support safety, accessibility, quality of life, and economic development;
- Improve resilience with responsible floodplain management and low impact recreation that reframes local creeks as a community asset; and
- Preserve local history and aesthetic character while supporting smart, affordable development that sustains community life.

Proposed DRI projects would implement longstanding and recurring recommendations from prior village plans related to walkability, complete streets, public and community spaces, marketing, resilience, housing, mixed uses, and small business development. The 2025 Village and Town of Schoharie Comprehensive Plan provides a roadmap for future development beyond DRI implementation.



SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

Public engagement for the Village of Schoharie DRI featured extensive outreach. The DRI planning process included five LPC meetings, two open houses, two pop-up events, two virtual surveys, seven focus groups and interviews, and the Open Call for Projects informational webinar. All information was posted to the project website where the public could submit comments, ask questions, subscribe to the project email list, and access DRI program resources. Printed comment cards and sign-in sheets were provided at all public DRI events, and participants were added to the DRI mailing list. DRI updates and announcements were noticed in local newspapers and on the village website, posted on flyers downtown, shared via local social media accounts, and emailed to the DRI mailing list.

The DRI process was led by an LPC comprised of municipal representatives, community leaders, and stakeholders from the public, non-profit, and private sectors. LPC members convened five meetings that were open to the public to refine the DRI boundary; draft the DRI Vision, Goals, and Strategies; and review the details of proposed projects and public feedback before deciding on a final project slate to recommend to the State.

Community outreach events revealed common themes regarding the perceived strengths, opportunities, and challenges for downtown Schoharie. Community members are proud of Schoharie's historic, rural character and desire a more connected, walkable, and vibrant downtown. Residents emphasized the need for better accessibility, family-friendly spaces, safety, venues for events, and beautification.

The public showed strong support for potential DRI projects that enhance Schoharie's vitality and reflect its historic character. Residents prioritized initiatives that improve quality of life, including upgrades to parks, the pool, the library, and pedestrian infrastructure. Participants at DRI public events were excited by initiatives that preserve historic buildings, activate downtown spaces, expand family- and youth-oriented amenities, improve walkability and connectivity, and support local businesses and cultural programming. Overall, the community favored projects that provide broad public benefit, advance economic growth, and reinforce Schoharie's identity as a welcoming, vibrant village.



Open House 2 Boards and Participants

VISION, GOALS, & STRATEGIES

The LPC developed the following vision statement, goals, and revitalization strategies for the Strategic Investment Plan, guided by community input received during the DRI application and the planning process.

Vision for Downtown:

“The Village of Schoharie, as a community, embraces its historic charm, natural beauty, and strong agricultural roots with a vibrant, inclusive, and walkable downtown. Schoharie is where tradition meets innovation - we honor our past while creating a dynamic community that supports multi-generational families as well as visitors and businesses.”

GOAL 1 VIBRANT, CONNECTED, & ENGAGED VILLAGE

Foster a welcoming, connected village center that encourages community interaction through vibrant public spaces, accessible streets, public art, and long-standing community traditions.

Strategy 1.1 - Invest in the design and programming of key public areas to support year-round events, markets, performances, and informal gathering, reinforcing community pride and interaction.

Strategy 1.2 - Upgrade sidewalks, crosswalks, and lighting in the village core to create safe, comfortable, and accessible routes for people of all ages and abilities, while improving connections between neighborhoods, businesses, and public spaces.

Strategy 1.3 - Strengthen and support long-standing community festivals, parades, and seasonal events while encouraging new activities that bring together multiple generations and cultures to share in the village's spirit.

Strategy 1.4 - Collaborate with local artists, schools, and cultural groups to install rotating public art, murals, and historic displays that reflect community identity and enhance visual interest throughout the downtown.

Strategy 1.5 - Encourage ground-floor uses like cafés, shops, and community hubs that spill out onto the street with seating, displays, or performances, helping activate the streetscape and support local businesses.

GOAL 2 TOURISM, HERITAGE, & CULTURAL IDENTITY

Establish Schoharie as a regional destination by enhancing access to and awareness of its natural, cultural, historic, recreational, and agricultural assets.

Strategy 2.1 - Create a cohesive branding identity that highlights Schoharie's unique history, natural beauty, and agricultural heritage—promoting events, landmarks, and recreational offerings through coordinated print, digital, and social media outreach.

Strategy 2.2 - Install clear signage, interpretive displays, and tour maps to guide visitors to key destinations.

Strategy 2.3 - Collaborate with local organizations to establish a regular schedule of cultural events, live music, workshops, and food-based experiences that celebrate Schoharie's identity and drive consistent visitation throughout the year.

Strategy 2.4 - Improve access to recreational spaces and promote outdoor activities that showcase the Schoharie's natural and scenic beauty.

GOAL 3 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & ECONOMIC GROWTH

Strengthen Schoharie's local economy by supporting the growth and expansion of existing businesses, attracting new small businesses, fostering entrepreneurship, and increasing foot traffic.

Strategy 3.1 - Invest in key village properties to support entrepreneurial activity, encourage local innovation, and catalyze small business growth in downtown Schoharie.

Strategy 3.2 - Create jobs and workforce development opportunities.

Strategy 3.3 - Partner with regional organizations to offer workshops, grant assistance, and technical support for local business owners and startups, especially in retail, food, agriculture, and creative sectors.

Strategy 3.4 - Invest in downtown beautification, signage, and pedestrian-friendly improvements that make the village more inviting to shoppers, tourists, and potential investors.

GOAL 4 HOUSING & LIVING SPACE

Honor community character and encourage diverse, accessible, and mixed-use housing options to support residents at all life stages.

Strategy 4.1 - Promote upper-floor residential units and small-scale infill housing to increase options while maintaining the historic scale and charm of Schoharie's Main Street and surrounding neighborhoods.

Strategy 4.2 - Encourage a range of housing types—including senior-friendly units, starter homes, and accessible apartments—to meet the needs of young families, aging residents, and individuals with disabilities.

Strategy 4.3 - Partner with regional housing agencies to identify opportunities for income-restricted or workforce housing that helps retain young professionals in the village.

GOAL 5 ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

Promote environmentally responsible land use and development and safeguard Schoharie's natural assets for future generations.

Strategy 5.1 - Encourage development practices that reduce flood risk, minimize impervious surfaces, and incorporate green infrastructure like rain gardens, permeable pavement, and bioswales.

Strategy 5.2 - Focus growth within existing developed areas to limit sprawl, protect agricultural land, and reduce environmental impact—aligning with Schoharie's historic village pattern.

Strategy 5.3 - Facilitate the use of solar, geothermal, and other renewable energy systems for homes and businesses, and promote energy-efficient building retrofits, especially for historic properties.

GOAL 6 YOUTH RETENTION & ENGAGEMENT

Provide spaces and programs that give young people meaningful opportunities to connect, contribute, and make Schoharie their hometown.

Strategy 6.1 - Develop and enhance parks, recreational facilities, and indoor community spaces where young people can safely gather, socialize, and participate in activities after school and on weekends.

Strategy 6.2 - Partner with local businesses, farms, and organizations to offer youth internships, part-time jobs, and volunteer roles that build skills and connect them to the local economy.

Strategy 6.3 - Offer art, music, and performance programs or public art opportunities that engage young people and reflect their perspectives.

Strategy 6.4 - Organize regular events such as outdoor movie nights, teen open mic nights, sports tournaments, or seasonal festivals that are planned with input from local youth and open to all ages.

PROJECTS PROPOSED FOR DRI FUNDING

Develop New Commercial Space with a Professional Healthcare Facility at 218 Main Street

1

Private

DRI Funding Request: \$2,000,000

Total Project Cost: \$18,863,000

Project Description: Construct a new, two-story commercial building with a modern healthcare facility and commercial/retail space at a long-vacant site.



Raise the Farmer's Beef and Brew at 445 Main Street as Schoharie's Gathering Table

3

Private

DRI Funding Request: \$1,500,000

Total Project Cost: \$2,000,000

Project Description: Construct a new location for the Farmer's Beef and Brew farm-to-table restaurant on a vacant site using a barn-style design with more seating, event space, and a large bar.



Build a New Apartment Community at 218 Main Street (rear)

2

Private

DRI Funding Request: \$2,000,000

Total Project Cost: \$10,233,000

Project Description: Build a new apartment community to expand housing options downtown with a mix of one- and two-bedroom units for residents of all ages, including parking and a small playground for residents.



Create the Village of Schoharie Small Project Fund

4

Non Profit

DRI Funding Request: \$600,000

Total Project Cost: \$780,000

Project Description: Establish a small, locally administered grant fund to help local businesses and non-profit organizations improve buildings, expand operations, and enhance public spaces with art.



Add and Enhance Community Spaces at the Schoharie Free Library

5
Non Profit

DRI Funding Request: \$976,000

Total Project Cost: \$976,000

Project Description: Update the historic Schoharie Free Library to create a more accessible community hub for expanded events, learning, creation, and programming.



Update the Borden’s Creamery Building into an Accessible, Modern Community Cultural Center

6
Non Profit

DRI Funding Request: \$870,000

Total Project Cost: \$870,000

Project Description: Renovate the historic Borden’s Creamery Building into a modern cultural center with an elevator, ADA and energy-efficiency upgrades, a modernized kitchen, safety systems, and theatre and gallery lighting.



Flow Through Fountaintown: Improve Pedestrian Access & Connectivity

7
Public

DRI Funding Request: \$2,500,000

Total Project Cost: \$2,500,000

Project Description: Improve downtown walkability through upgraded pedestrian infrastructure, traffic calming, green spaces, and improved signage to create safer, more inviting connections between key destinations such as the 1743 Palatine House Museum, Community Pool, Schoharie Free Library, and Main Street businesses.



Create Fire House Park at 133 Grand Street

8
Public

DRI Funding Request: \$1,510,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,510,000

Project Description: Transform the vacant former fire house site into a new, public park just off Main Street with play areas, shaded seating, gardens, and green infrastructure. The park will promote community gathering, resilience, and walkable downtown activity in the heart of the village.



Unlock the Community Pool's Potential as an Accessible, Community Space

9

Public

DRI Funding Request: \$1,958,000

Total Project Cost: \$1,958,000

Project Description: Reimagine Schoharie's Community Pool as a modern, fully accessible facility with upgraded pools, site improvements, and a new ADA-compliant, all-season bathhouse featuring community space.



Fountaintown Living: Schoharie Branding and Marketing

10

Public

DRI Funding Request: \$500,000

Total Project Cost: \$500,000

Project Description: Implement a cohesive branding and marketing campaign to promote downtown Schoharie as a vibrant destination through online marketing, new wayfinding and interpretive signage, and interactive elements like augmented reality and a StoryWalk®.

